Jerry Agel
The Penthouse
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1/20/81

Dear Jerry,

Your are an old friend. I remember you for your many kindness, not your 22 Fires. So, when I got a copy of Liftpn's book, I've been reading it more than I would have because I have no interest in the bastard. (Also the chance that George Lardner might ask me some questions.)

It is warming up enough today so that I may be able to drive a little. Not supposed to drive much and never when temp. be;ow freezing. So I'll be able to save a days time in getting this to you by mailing it if we go out.

However, before I get deeply invooved, you have not answered what I regard as a fair question: what is your purpose?

I can tell you much about the book. And I'll read the incredible TIME spread after writing this, in case we do leave. Newsweek had a reporter read the book with care and he decided it lacked credibility from the internal evidence. He is correct. So why believe any of it?

Let me correct your note. I told you that in the summer of 1966 Lifton phoned me from Los Angeles to inform me that the M.O. of the assassination was Dealey Plaza tunnels and the snipers' perches, papier mache trees. He claimed this was engineered by Brown & Root, an enormous defense contractor, so read LBJ. ...(did not tell you Lifton had been in mental hospitals and have no knowledge, either way. I do recall that I was told that Raymond Marcus had once had to take him to a LA hospital when he crossed the line. I'd heard that he'd had mental problems but I have no personal knowledge. I do regard him as a paranoid and a nut and nit a good person. He's wild and egomaniacal. And dishonest.

The wrong question is "How do you feel?" From the time of the first operation I've felt fine and not needed any pian killers or sleeping pills. The question is how are you doing, and to that I have to say I can't see any real progress. Maybe the specialist can. I see him again tomorrow. Last time, when I was beginning to have trouble with the left foot. he said it looked fine. And the trouble has continued to where I can hardly get a show on. But I don't know what is normal when the pipes are plugged up. Only what I recall from the earlier venous thrombosis and there is no comparison.

Destroying Lifton's basic conjectures and any vestige or honesty are child's play. The dishonesty permeates. It is in small matters and in big ones.

I've been skipping around in his book. I read the last first, to be able to see what he calls proof of his switching caskets theory. I've heard that he has, somewhere in the early part, a special version of the Jean Valjean drek.

I've read the Time summary. It is what the book says and it is so wild I can't imagine any responsible publication going for it. It is unquestioning and thus repeats some of Lifton's puffery as fact, which it isn't.

Anyway, I don't think the lying bastard is worth a lot of trouble unless you have some special purpose. I'll be content to read the time while I'm resting from worthwhile things. I will be reading it and I'll mark it up some.

What interests me is why Peter Shepherd would want him to personalize to the extreme degree he did (most of the early part of the book is pointless except as egotripping) and that in any form Macmillan would consider publishin it. It has a large budget.

Best wishes,